

NORTHERN CHEYENNES, MONTANA.

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
THE DRAFT OF A BILL RELATING TO NORTHERN CHEYENNES,  
MONTANA.

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FEBRUARY 4, 1902.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
*Washington, February 3, 1902.*

SIR: Referring to H. R. Doc. No. 153, Fifty-fifth Congress, third session, relative to the Northern Cheyennes, Tongue River Agency, Mont., I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a report of the 30th ultimo, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and accompanying bill providing an appropriation for the purchase of heifers and bulls for these Indians, and for the construction of a wire fence around a portion of their reservation.

The necessity for this legislation is fully shown by the Commissioner's report, and I have the honor to request that the bill submitted be passed as a separate measure, or, if that is not practicable, that it be incorporated in one of the pending bills.

Very respectfully,

E. A. HITCHCOCK,  
*Secretary.*

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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JANUARY 30, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to invite attention to H. R. Doc. No. 153, Fifty-fifth Congress, third session, containing the report of Inspector James McLaughlin, dated November 14, 1898, made in compliance with section 10 of the Indian appropriation act for the fiscal year 1899, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to send an inspector to the reservation of the Northern Cheyenne Indians in Montana to make a full, complete report upon the conditions existing upon said reservation. The section

prescribed that the inspector should effect, if feasible, the removal of the Northern Cheyennes; also report in detail upon the white settlers legally and illegally on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, the value of the land occupied by them and the improvements thereon; also negotiate with those having valid titles for the sale of their holdings, and make recommendation as to the settlement of the claims of white settlers having equitable rights. The section further prescribes:

He shall investigate the subject of fencing in the said reservation, and shall indicate the lines such fence should follow and the estimated cost of same, and shall report upon the number of cattle and sheep which may safely be pastured within the limits recommended to be fenced. \* \* \*

With regard to this particular part of his duties the inspector makes a very lucid report, from which the following quotations are taken as they appear in the document referred to:

Page 7.—With regard to agriculture and the cattle industry:

Agriculture that would be remunerative, with only a few narrow valleys within the entire tract of the proposed reservation, is out of the question in that broken and hilly country, and there is not the slightest possibility of the Northern Cheyenne Indians ever becoming self-supporting by following an agricultural life in that arid region; but as the country is so well adapted to stock raising the Indians, if given the required start by providing them with about 2,000 cows, can follow that pursuit with profit to themselves if properly directed, and would in a few years have marketable cattle to dispose of, which would be an incentive to all to increase their herds that they might profit by the sale of their matured animals, and they should in a few years, with proper direction and management, become successful stockgrowers, and have sufficient beef cattle to market annually to insure their self-support.

The Northern Cheyennes are of fine physique and willing to work when opportunity is afforded them, as instanced while I was at their agency. They delivered 250 tons of hay in three days and 250 cords of wood within a week. They are ready at all times to do work by which they can earn a little money, and numerous white settlers told me that they employed the Cheyenne Indians in their harvest fields in preference to white laborers, but apart from this work for the neighboring whites they have had very little opportunity in the past of procuring employment or providing for their wants in any way other than the cultivation of small garden patches, which, without irrigation in that arid region, seldom amount to anything, and having no cattle they are obliged to depend almost entirely upon the Government rations issued to them biweekly. They are very desirous to engage in stock raising, but do not own any stock other than ponies (of which they have about 4,000, which are almost valueless and of very little use to them), and having no means of purchasing cattle are therefore unable to do but little toward their own support. If 2,000 cows, or 2-year-old heifers, preferably native Western-range stock, were furnished them (heifers would be less expensive and equally good), 1,000 head to be furnished next spring and 1,000 the following year, with 40 graded bulls for each 1,000 cows, I am confident, from the past experience of these Indians and present desire to better their condition, they would make marked progress and within a few years prove themselves not to be so worthless and undeserving of assistance as they have been represented by persons unacquainted with their surroundings, who do not know how their progress has been retarded by conditions that have existed upon their reservation, and over which they had no control.

Page 13. With regard to the fence:

The northern and southern boundary lines should be surveyed and a substantial fence constructed along those boundaries as soon after the reservation is established as is possible. This, with the western boundary, which is the eastern line of the Crow Reservation, being already fenced, would leave only the eastern front along Tongue River open, and I do not deem it necessary to fence along Tongue River at present, but should it become necessary to have the eastern boundary inclosed a fence could be built there at some future time.

The northern boundary is about 35 miles in length in a direct course, but there being 3 miles of offsets in the line of the 40-mile limits of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company's grant, makes 38 miles of fence required for the northern boundary. The southern boundary is 24 miles in length, and it will require 3 miles additional to fence around Joseph T. Brown's and John T. Logan's claims, making 27 miles

required for the southern boundary, a total of 65 miles of fence required to inclose the northern and southern boundaries.

Good material for fence posts is plentiful on the reservation, and can be furnished by the Indians at 10 cents apiece, delivered. I estimate the cost of the fence as follows: 65 miles of 5-strand wire fence, with cedar or pitch-pine posts  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, set 3 feet in the ground and 24 feet apart, with stays 5 feet long and averaging 2 inches wide, woven into wires 4 feet apart, alternating every second stay, at \$110 per mile.

Although not specifically directed to do so, the inspector also reports upon the agency buildings as follows:

The agency buildings are situated in a valley on the east of Lama Deer Creek, about 4 miles south of the northern boundary of the reservation, which is the southern 40-mile limit of the grant to the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, and the agency is as near central on an east and west line of the proposed reservation and with reference to the Indian settlements as from the nature of the country it could well be located, but I would recommend that a subissue station and a blacksmith shop be established on Tongue River about 20 miles southeast of the agency, for convenience of the Indians who reside in that district.

I would also recommend an appropriation of \$10,000 for buildings at the agency, to be expended in erection of new buildings and remodeling some of the old ones, the same being badly needed for properly conducting affairs at the agency.

Accompanying the inspector's report was a bill to carry out his recommendations, which will be found on page 146 of the document.

The bill established the boundaries of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in Montana, and provided—

For the payment of white settlers and to compensate Indians for vacating their locations on the east side of Tongue River.....	\$151,595.00
For the construction of 65 miles of wire fence.....	7,150.00
For purchase of 1,000 2-year-old native Western-range heifers, and 40 2-year-old Hereford or Durham bulls.....	28,200.00
For buildings at agency.....	10,000.00
For subissue station, farmer's residence, and blacksmith shop at Tongue River.....	3,055.00
Total.....	200,000.00

The inspector's report, with accompanying bill, was submitted to Congress by the Department on January 16, 1899, with recommendations for the ratification of the agreement in the report and passage of the bill.

In addition to his report contained in the document under consideration Inspector McLaughlin made two others with regard to the first item, February 3 and 16, 1900, which increased the amount necessary to pay the settlers to \$171,615.44. This amount was appropriated by the Indian appropriation act of May 31, 1900.

The remaining four items are so far unacted upon by Congress.

With regard to this I respectfully urge—

First. An appropriation of \$28,000 for the third item. In view of the report of Inspector McLaughlin and what has been said by others familiar with the situation, I am convinced that the only practical way of putting these Indians upon a self-supporting footing is to engage them in stock raising. At present they have no stock of their own. They are in a great degree supported from an appropriation which will be found annually in the Indian appropriation bill, which reads for the current year as it has for several years:

#### NORTHERN CHEYENNES AND ARAPAHOES.

For subsistence and civilization, as per agreement with the Sioux Indians, approved February 28, 1877, including subsistence and civilization of Northern Cheyennes removed from Pine Ridge Agency to Tongue River, Montana.....

\$90,000

This appropriation is divided equitably for the support of the Northern Cheyennes at the Tongue River Agency, Mont., and the Shoshone Agency on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

The expenditures for the Tongue River Indians out of this appropriation for the current year will be approximately \$62,000. Of this about \$56,000 is for subsistence.

It is with the idea of doing away with this annual appropriation in the near future that the purchase of stock cattle is urged. The Northern Cheyennes have no cattle other than about 4,000 ponies, which are valueless, nor have they any fund of their own.

Second. An appropriation of \$7,150 for the second item. While it would be possible for the Indians to care for their stock without this fence, yet it would be of very great advantage in that it would not only keep stock from straying, but, what is equally important, it would prevent neighboring stock from trespassing upon each other's reservation or depredating upon cultivated fields.

As to the agency buildings and the subissue station, I am not convinced that an appropriation therefor is necessary at the present time. The office has an appropriation for buildings and repair of buildings at agencies, and it is possible that it will be sufficient to do what is necessary in this direction at Tongue River.

Accompanying this is a draft of a bill to carry out the ideas here presented, which I earnestly recommend be presented to Congress and its passage urged as a separate measure. If that is not practicable, then it is suggested it be incorporated in the urgent deficiency bill, or failing that that it be included in the Indian appropriation act for 1903.

Very respectfully,

A. C. TONNER,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:* That the following sums be, and they are hereby, appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, viz.: For the purchase of heifers and bulls for the Indians on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, twenty-eight thousand dollars; for the construction of wire fence around a portion of said reservation, seven thousand one hundred and fifty dollars; in all thirty-five thousand one hundred and fifty dollars: *Provided,* That the expenditure of this money shall be under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, who shall purchase the cattle, regulate their distribution, and construct the fence, according to such rules and regulations as in his discretion he may deem best.